

Members

Sen. Becky Skillman, Chairperson
Sen. Steven Johnson
Sen. Rose Antich
Sen. Mark Blade
Rep. Tiny Adams, Vice-Chairperson
Rep. Peggy Welch
Rep. Gloria Goeglein
Rep. Matt Whetstone
Garland Ferrell
Frank Fritch
Thomas Zakrzewski
Vernon Jewell
Douglas Lechner
Gloria Stephani
John Catey
Richard Dodge
Bill Mansard
Al Dillon
Jean Lushin
LSA Staff:

James Jett, Attorney for the Commission
Ross Hooten, Attorney for the Commission
Beverly Holloway, Fiscal Analyst for the Commission

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COUNTY GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION

Legislative Services Agency
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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 5, 1999
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. Becky Skillman, Chairperson; Sen. Steven Johnson; Sen. Rose Antich; Sen. Mark Blade; Rep. Tiny Adams, Vice-Chairperson; Rep. Gloria Goeglein; Vernon Jewell; Bill Mansard.

Members Absent: Rep. Peggy Welch; Rep. Matt Whetstone; Garland Ferrell; Frank Fritch; Thomas Zakrzewski; Douglas Lechner; Gloria Stephani; John Catey; Richard Dodge; Al Dillon; Jean Lushin.

Chairperson Senator Becky Skillman called the meeting to order and had the members of the Commission and the staff for the Commission introduce themselves. Sen. Skillman announced that due to a lack of a quorum, official business would not be conducted, but testimony would be heard.

Sen. Skillman reviewed the charge of the Commission and discussed the work that the Commission had completed during the previous two interim sessions. Sen. Skillman continued with an overview of the time line for this year and for the remaining years of the Commission.

Sen. Skillman read the recommendations for action to the 1999 Commission made by the 1998 Commission which included:

- 1) Obtain the results of the Association of Indiana Counties task force on changing

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

county government.

2) Receive an update on the Metropolitan Association of Greater Indianapolis Communities COMPETE project.

3) Have a representative of the Indiana Judges Association appear before the Commission to discuss the judicial system, court fees, and judicial budgets.

4) Receive a report from the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Taxes.

The Commission discussed the recommendations from the 1998 Commission, and determined that the report of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission was no longer necessary.

Dave Bottorff and Travis Worl, Association of Indiana Counties

To cover the first recommendation from the 1998 Commission, Sen. Skillman recognized Dave Bottorff of the Association of Indiana Counties.

Mr. Bottorff informed the Commission that the task force was ended late in 1998 after the Association of Indiana Counties (AIC) determined that standing committee's would be of greater benefit to AIC than the task force. Mr. Bottorff reviewed the role of the AIC standing committees and discussed several items currently under consideration by the AIC standing committees. Mr. Bottorff then yielded to Travis Worl of AIC for a continued discussion of the standing committees of AIC.

At the conclusion of Mr. Worl's remarks, Mr. Bottorff discussed several issues AIC's legislative committee was considering, including a perceived conflict in fiscal administration regarding local boards of health. Sen. Antich and Sen. Blade posed questions on the budget and taxing structure of the local boards of health. Rep. Goeglein presented an example of a similar problem that had occurred in Allen County.

A question by Sen. Antich opened a discussion regarding the upcoming reassessment. The Commission discussed the reassessment and posed several questions to Bill Waltz of the State Board of Tax Commissioners.

Sen. Skillman called for questions from the Commission for AIC and heard none.

Sen. Skillman then asked Mr. Bottorff if, based upon the ending of the task force and the reports just given on the actions of the new standing committees, the Commission would be correct in understanding that AIC had no recommendations on the changes in county government that the Commission is charged with studying. Mr. Bottorff replied that Sen. Skillman was correct. AIC had no recommendations regarding changes in county government.

Sen. Skillman then asked if AIC had any position on the structure of county government in Lake County. Mr. Bottorff stated that AIC intended to remain neutral on the issue of the structure of Lake County government.

Lee Lewellen, Metropolitan Association of Greater Indianapolis Communities

To cover the second recommendation from the 1998 Commission, Sen. Skillman recognized Lee Lewellen of the Metropolitan Association of Greater Indianapolis Communities (MAGIC).

Mr. Lewellen discussed the COMPETE project, its origins, and how the project results would be released. Mr. Lewellen provided a handout to the Commission concerning the COMPETE project and then reviewed the handout. The information in the handout is available from the Legislative Information Center as Exhibit A. Mr. Lewellen discussed two questions asked by the survey:

1) Is there a duplication of local government services?

2) Are there outdated local government services?

Mr. Lewellen notified the Commission that MAGIC would be available to present the results of the survey to the Commission after August 25, 1999.

Changes in welfare

Sen. Skillman asked staff attorney Ross Hooten to present information to the Commission regarding the changes in the welfare system adopted by this past session of the Indiana General Assembly. The information presented is available from the Legislative Information Center as Exhibit B. The Commission discussed the changes.

Court fees

Sen. Skillman asked staff fiscal analyst Beverly Holloway to present information to the Commission regarding court fees. The information presented is available from the Legislative Information Center as Exhibit C. The Commission discussed the changes.

Public testimony, other business, and closing

Sen. Skillman called for public testimony, but there was none.

Sen. Skillman asked the members of the Commission if the members had any additional items to discuss.

Sen. Antich discussed the question of support in Lake County toward a change in the Lake County government structure and noted that the Commission should have more testimony on the issue.

Vernon Jewell discussed the upcoming reassessment and asked for a presentation by the State Board of Tax Commissioners to answer questions. Sen. Blade and Sen. Antich voiced support for a presentation from the State Board of Tax Commissioners. The Commission briefly discussed the reassessment with Bill Waltz.

Sen. Skillman asked Mr. Waltz to have the State Board of Tax Commissioners prepare a brief presentation on the changes and new procedures that are being implemented.

Sen. Skillman discussed the next meeting with the members of the Commission. Sen. Skillman set the next meeting for September 2, 1999 at 1:00 p.m.

On the agenda for the next meeting Sen. Skillman stated that the Commission would have information from the National Association of Counties and testimony from Lake County officials.

Sen. Skillman adjourned the meeting.